

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

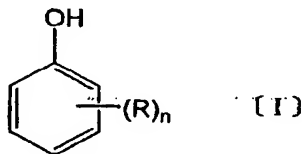
LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (original): A method for producing a hydroxybenzoic acid compound comprising, dehydrating a phenol compound and an alkaline metal compound to form the alkaline metal salt of the phenol compound and reacting the alkaline metal salt and carbon dioxide, wherein the dehydrating step is conducted by reacting the alkaline metal compound with an excess amount of the phenol compound, which is in excess of the alkaline metal compound, at a temperature of 160°C or above.

2. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein said dehydrating step is conducted at a temperature of 180-300°C.

3. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein 2-30 parts by mole of the phenol compound is reacted per 1 part by mole of the alkaline metal compound.

4. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the phenol compound is a compound represented by formula (I):



wherein, R is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen atom, linear or branched chain C1-20 alkyl, C1-20 alkenyl and C1-20 alkoxy groups; n is an integer from 1 to 4.

Preliminary Amendment

National Stage Entry of PCT/JP03/12456

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5. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the phenol compound is an alkyl substituted phenol.
6. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the phenol compound is a di-alkyl substituted phenol.
7. (currently amended): The method of claim 5 ~~or 6~~, wherein, the alkyl group of the alkyl substituted phenol is selected from the group consisting of methyl, ethyl, n-propyl, iso-propyl, n-butyl, sec-butyl, tert-butyl and octyl.
8. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the phenol compound is selected from the group consisting of o-cresol, p-cresol, m-cresol, 2,6-dimethylphenol, 3,5-dimethylphenol, 2,5-dimethylphenol, o-isopropylphenol, 2,6-di-tert-butylphenol, 2,4-di-tert-butylphenol, 2,5-di-tert-butylphenol, 4-n-octylphenol and 4-tert-octylphenol.
9. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the phenol compound is 2,6-di-tert-butylphenol or 2,4-di-tert-butylphenol and said hydroxybenzoic acid is 3,5-di-tert-butyl-4-hydroxybenzoic acid or 3,5-di-tert-butyl-2-hydroxybenzoic acid.
10. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the alkaline metal compound is sodium hydroxide or potassium hydroxide.
11. (new): The method of claim 6, wherein, the alkyl group of the alkyl substituted phenol is selected from the group consisting of methyl, ethyl, n-propyl, iso-propyl, n-butyl, sec-butyl, tert-butyl and octyl.